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De Lorean Prosecutors Say Trial to Be Delayed If Orders Aren't Lifted

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

LOS ANGELES — Federal prosecutors told a judge that the cocaine smuggling trial of former auto-maker John Z. De Lorean could be delayed until 1985 unless the judge reverses 51 orders requiring various federal agencies to turn over documents requested by the defense.

Mr. De Lorean's attorneys had asked for the documents from federal intelligence and law-enforcement agencies in a search for information that would show improper government activity in the investigation of the case. The judge said he would review the documents privately before deciding if any of them should be made available to the defense.

In a court filing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Layn R. Phillips said, "the consolidation of 51 (requests for information) with De Lorean's pending criminal prosecution will make the trial in this matter in calendar year 1983 or 1984 an unlikely proposition."

The judge's orders required the agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, to release the documents by next Wednesday.

But the prosecutor argued that it would take much longer than that for the agencies to comply. "No court has ever authorized such an extensive and time-consuming undertaking in a criminal prosecution," Mr. Phillips said in the document.

The trial currently is scheduled to begin in October.

Howard Weitzman, an attorney for Mr. De Lorean, said he didn't know if the judge's orders would delay the trial. But, he said, "This trial does involve John De Lorean's life, and if (the trial) needs to be continued to find out information vital to his defense, I would hope the government would have no objection."